

CORRESPONDENCE WITH A SOUTHERN BAPTIST

September 24, 2001 (David W. Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061-0368, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org) - Recently I received the following e-mail from a visitor to the Way of Life web site:

“I am truly saddened by what appears to me to be a willful lack of knowledge of what the SBC is really about. I grew up Independent Baptist and heard all of the talking points and tactics your site uses. I am now at a Southern Baptist Seminary and with International Mission Board. We are seeing more people saved and churches planted in more countries than ANY other Evangelical Bible Believing Denomination in the world. To compare Lolley, an Ex President, with current conditions is laughable. To point out problems with some of the churches in relation to Scriptural principles without pointing out that plenty of Independent Churches have the same problems really lacks integrity. Perhaps the godliest thing you could do is try to reach the Muslim world with us instead of spending so much time tearing at your brothers in Christ. I cannot understand the source of your venom for people like me who are following Scripture and trying to reach the lost. It is kind of sad really.”

BROTHER CLOUD’S REPLY:

Hello, ----- I have no venom toward anyone. I know that I am an absolute nobody and that apart from the goodness freely given to me by Jesus Christ, I have nothing and I am nothing. I do not look down my nose at anyone as if I consider myself better than them. Woe be unto me if I would do that. I am constantly reminded by the Lord of how unrighteous and unfaithful I am in myself. I was a worthless hippy who shamed his kind parents and who wasted many years of his life bumming around, going to jail, etc., before I was saved. Such foolishness leaves deep spiritual scars. I know that without the Lord I am a zero with the rim rubbed out.

As for my attitude toward Southern Baptists, I have many Southern Baptist friends and relatives. I speak out at least as much against error and compromise among independent Baptists as I do Southern Baptists. There are many Southern Baptists who read my materials and who even receive my daily mailings and we have had some good and sometimes spirited exchanges. The good Lord is my witness when I testify that I have absolutely no ill feeling toward any Southern Baptist man or woman of God and I praise the Lord for every good thing He has done through the SBC. Though I warn frequently about Dr. Billy Graham, I also love him and have wept for him. On his best days, he preaches a gospel that is plainer, and a repentance that is more scriptural, than that preached by many independent Baptists. Some of my earliest memories were of hearing him preach on the radio in my parents' Southern Baptist home. I have never ceased to thrill a little at the sound of his powerful voice. My wife and mother-in-law were saved partly through his ministry. I thank God for that. Billy Graham has been able to preach to

more people than any man who has ever lived, and that is wonderful. At the same time, as a preacher who has been commissioned to earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints and to reprove, rebuke, and exhort, I am not going to close my eyes to the compromise of such an influential Christian leader. Jehoshaphat was a godly king who did many good things, but God did not hesitate to send a prophet to him to condemn him for his evil association with Ahab. Has God changed and does He now overlook sinful alliances?

If you are preaching the true Gospel of Jesus Christ (as opposed to one of the multitude of false gospels) in this needy world, I can surely rejoice in that even though I might not agree with everything you are doing. I have some charismatic friends, and I have no doubt that they know and love the Lord Jesus Christ. At the same time, I do not hesitate to warn about charismatic doctrinal errors and I do not hesitate to call for separation on the basis of doctrine in the case of serious issues.

Separation unto the truth from error is not hateful. It is obedience to God and is love for God and His truth and is love for those who need to be warned of wolves in sheep's clothing. It is sad that you do not understand these things and that you confuse reproof and rebuke with hate. It is sad that you attack the messenger instead of listening carefully to the message.

By the way, to set the record straight, there are more independent Baptist missionary church planters than Southern Baptist. (Of course, God is the one who keeps the only records that really matter.) A large percentage of SBC missionaries today are not church planters.

Sincerely in Christ,
Brother Cloud

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